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## Frank Gardiner Wisner Dead; Former Top Official of C.I.A.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—

Frank Gardiner Wisner, a former New York lawyer and for many years a top official of the Central Intelligence Agency, died at his farm in nearby Galena, Md., today. He was 56 years old.

According to the police in Kent County, Md., Mr. Wisner shot himself in the right temple with a 20-gauge shotgun. Friends said that he had been despondent ever since a hernia operation last spring, and that he had been hospitalized for a brief period this summer.

Mr. Wisner's work in the intelligence agency was necessarily shrouded in secrecy. The State Department's biographic register for 1964 lists him only as "gov-serv" (government servant), and officials of the agency would not go beyond that today.

However, Mr. Wisner was said to have masterminded the successful anti-Communist coup in Guatemala in 1954, and to have participated in or directed other missions undertaken by the agency.

A recent book on the C.I.A., "The Invisible Government," says that Mr. Wisner was brought from the State Department to the C.I.A. in the late 1940's to head the newly created Office of Policy Coordination. This office was the forerunner of the agency's "Plans Division," created in 1951.

Its principal responsibility was the conduct of secret political operations, as opposed to the other agency functions of gathering intelligence and mak-

ing analyses. Mr. Wisner succeeded Allen W. Dulles, later C.I.A. director—as head of the Plans Division in 1951.

According to the book, Mr. Wisner was sent to London in 1959 as "station chief"—the highest-ranking C.I.A. man in that country. He resigned from the agency in 1962, and until his death practiced law in Washington.

Mr. Wisner, who was born in Laurel, Miss., received a B.A. degree from the University of Virginia in 1931 and an LL.B. from the university's law school three years later.

He was admitted to the New York Bar in 1935, and practiced law there for several years with the firm of Carter, Ledyard & Milburg.

In 1941, he joined the United States Naval Reserve, attaining the rank of commander. Between 1943 and 1946 he served with the Office of Strategic Services, where he developed an interest in intelligence work.

In 1947-48, he served the State Department as deputy assistant secretary of state for occupied countries. He joined the C.I.A. in September, 1948, and quickly rose to become one of its key officers.

Survivors include his widow, the former Mary Knowles of Greenwich, Conn., four children, and a sister, Mrs. Alexander Chisholm of Laurel, Miss.

His oldest son, Frank 2d, is serving with the State Department in Saigon. In addition to the farm, the Wisners maintain a home in the Georgetown section of Washington.

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